

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CONGRESS SAYS NO TO TORTURE**

### ***BUT STILL NEEDS TO END THE USE OF DIPLOMATIC ASSURANCES***

**WASHINGTON, DC-** Twice in the last week, the House of Representatives has voted to approve amendments offered by Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) which would prohibit the use of any funds in contravention of legal obligations under the Convention Against Torture.

“The Congress has sent a clear message: we neither condone nor endorse torture either here in the U.S. or in any country that we send detainees. While my amendments on the three different appropriations are important steps, the Administration continues to rely on promises from countries like Syria and Uzbekistan that they will not torture. We cannot take the word of Syria or Uzbekistan. My bill, The Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act—H.R. 952, would end the use of these so-called ‘diplomatic assurances’ not to torture. I strongly urge the International Relations Committee to act on my bill,” said Rep. Markey.

The House actions came on June 16, 2005, when the House approved an amendment offered by Rep. Markey to the Science, State, Justice Appropriations bill (H.R. 2862) by a vote of 415-8-1 and on June 20, 2005 when the House approved an identical Markey amendment to the Department of Defense Appropriations bill by a unanimous voice vote. On March 16, 2005, the House approved an identical Markey amendment to the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill (H.R. 1268) by a vote of 420-2-3. A modified version of this amendment was signed into law by President Bush on May 11, 2005 (P.L. 109-13).

The House’s resounding bipartisan support for the Markey anti-torture amendments follows reports in the press of secret transfers of prisoners on privately owned jets by the CIA. Prisoners are reportedly drugged and shackled and flown to countries such as Syria, Uzbekistan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia where they are likely to be interrogated under torture. This practice is called “extraordinary rendition.” The Bush Administration has never formally stated how many cases of extraordinary renditions have occurred, but unofficial reports estimate the total number since 9/11 to be 100 to 150.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Human Rights First have issued a joint statement supporting the Markey amendment and calling for an end to the outsourcing of torture and endorsing the Markey amendments.

Sixty-two Members of Congress and numerous human rights and legal experts also endorse H.R. 952, the “Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act” – also authored by Rep. Markey, which would permanently end the current practice of rendering prisoners to countries that have been determined by the U.S. State Department to routinely engage in torture, and bar reliance on

“diplomatic assurances” from countries that practice torture as the basis for rendering persons to that country.

“The test of a nation is found as much in how it wages war as in how it promotes the values of peace and democracy. I will continue to speak out until we end the outsourcing of torture, until we end the morally bankrupt practice of accepting promises from Syria and Uzbekistan and until we pass my bill, H.R. 952,” said Rep. Markey.

Please see Rep. Markey’s website for more information on his work to end the practice of ‘outsourcing torture’ - <http://www.house.gov/markey/>

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